

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3293

INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

UNCLAS CANBERRA 3811

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, AS

SUBJECT: APRIL UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS - SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT

REF: CANBERRA 2186; 01051; 02682; 02549 AND 02758

1. SUMMARY: UNEMPLOYMENT CONTINUED ITS DOWNWARD TREND DURING APRIL BUT THE LEVEL IS STILL ABOVE 6 PERCENT. STATISTICS ISSUED SIMULTANEOUSLY ON MAY 12 BY THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS (ABS), AND THE COMMONWEALTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (CES) SHOW THAT 6.2 OR 6.3 PERCENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR FORCE WERE UNEMPLOYED AT THE END OF LAST MONTH. THE FIGURES, HOWEVER, ARE 25 PERCENT HIGHER THAN THOSE FOR THE SIMILAR PERIOD LAST YEAR. THE DATA ALSO SHOWS THAT MOST OF THOSE FINDING JOBS IN APRIL WERE TEENAGERS WHO RECENTLY LEFT SCHOOL. ADULT UNEMPLOYMENT ACTUALLY SHOWED A SLIGHT INCREASE. MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SAID THAT CONTINUING HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT WAS "AN UNFORTUNATE UNCLASSIFIED

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FACT", "HOWEVER, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT ABOUT THE APRIL FIGURES WAS THE IMPACT THE GOVERNMENT'S YOUTH TRAINING PROGRAM WAS HAVING ON TEENAGE UNEMPLOYMENT."

2. THE TWO SETS OF DATA WERE GREETED WITH CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM. THE ABS STATISTICS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT REGARDS AS BEING THE MORE RELIABLE, SHOW THAT THE NUMBER

OF PEOPLE LOOKING FOR FULL TIME WORK FELL BY 11,400 (OF WHOM 11,000 WERE TEENAGERS AGED 15 TO 19 YEARS) TO 334,300.

3. THE CES FIGURES SHOW THAT AN ADDITIONAL 2,632 ADULTS REGISTERED AS UNEMPLOYED - AN INCREASE OF 0.7 PERCENT IN ADULT UNEMPLOYMENT.

4. THE ABS FIGURES PUT THE TOTAL APRIL UNEMPLOYMENT AT 401,700; I.E. 334,300 OR 6.2 PERCENT SEEKING FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT AND 67,400 LOOKING FOR PART-TIME WORK.

5. THE CES DATA SHOWED A SLIGHT VARIATION WITH 402,534 UNEMPLOYED PERSONS OR 6.3 PERCENT OF THE FULL AND PART-TIME LABOR FORCE.

6. THE NUMBER OF JOB VACANCIES OFFERED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE FELL IN APRIL BY 955 OR 4.9 PERCENT TO 18,568 COMPARED WITH A FALL OF 2,460 (10.5 PERCENT) TO 21,008 IN APRIL 1977. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, 21 UNEMPLOYED FOR EVERY UNFILLED VACANCY.

7. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS LOOKING FOR PART-TIME WORK ALSO DECREASED BY 7,200 AND IN THE TOTAL UNEMPLOYED SECTOR THERE WERE 196,000 MALES AND 137,700 FEMALES.

8. DURING APRIL 146,094 PEOPLE REGISTERED FOR UNEMPLOYMENT UNCLASSIFIED

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WITH THE CES WERE EITHER PLACED OR NO LONGER NEEDED HELP. REFERRALS TO EMPLOYERS TOTALED 114,941.

9. THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ANTHONY STREET SAID THAT CONTINUING HIGH ADULT UNEMPLOYMENT WAS "AN UNFORTUNATE FACT".

10. MR STREET ALSO SAID THAT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT ABOUT THE APRIL FIGURES WAS THE IMPACT THE GOVERNMENT'S SPECIAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAM WAS HAVING ON TEENAGE UNEMPLOYMENT.

11. THE OPPOSITION AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY (ALP) SPOKESMAN ON EMPLOYMENT SAID ALTHOUGH HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE DROP IN UNEMPLOYMENT, HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT A CONTINUED DECREASE. "IF THINGS CONTINUE THE WAY THEY HAVE OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, THEN OUR PREDICTION FOR EARLY NEXT YEAR OF AN INCREASE OF UNEMPLOYMENT TO 9 AND 10 PERCENT IS GOING TO RING TRUE", HE SAID.
ALSTON

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